



Olympia Office

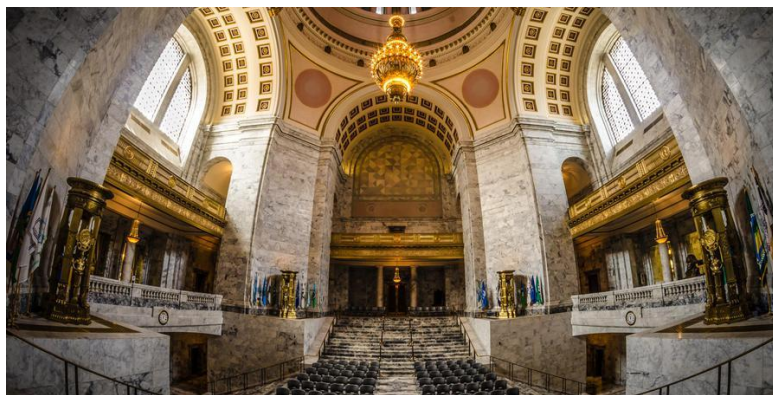
2023 PRE-LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 2023

On **Monday, January 9**, the Washington State Legislature will convene for the 2023 session. The regular session will last 105 days and ending on **Sunday, April 23, 2023**.

This legislative session marks the **first session** in over two years that will be **convened back in person**, although **virtual testimony** and meeting options for the public will remain available. We will keep you updated about the Legislature's plans and logistics on remote activity. This still remains in flux and will likely become clearer as we go through session. Systems and procedures are still being worked on by legislative staff.

With little change in the legislature's partisan make up, there will similarly be little change to the ongoing priorities of the legislative leadership, although with an interesting dynamic between the Democrats in the House and Senate, and differing priorities. The major issues of the previous session will carry forward, especially with a large class of freshman legislators, as well as many legislators that are coming to the capitol campus for the first time since being elected in the 2020 elections.



LEGISLATIVE & POLITICAL MAKEUP

The **House is controlled by majority Democrats** with a **58-40 margin**, and **Democrats control the Senate 29-20**. **Sen. Andy Billig** (Spokane), **Senate Majority Leader** remains in his post, and **Rep. Laurie Jinkins** (Tacoma) remains the **Speaker of the House**.

The **biggest change to the leadership** is **Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon** (West Seattle) who was elected **House Majority Leader**, succeeding retiring Democrat Rep. Pat Sullivan.

In committee leadership news, there are several new committee chairs in the House and Senate. Please see below for the new 2023 committee chairs (in parenthesis below):



NEW HOUSE COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Environment (Rep. Doglio); Consumer Protection and Business (Rep. Walen); Finance (Rep. Berg); Healthcare & Wellness (Rep. Riccelli); Local Government (Rep. Duerr); and State Government (Rep. Ramos).

NEW SENATE COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Business, Financial Services, Gaming & Trade (Sen. Stanford); Environment, Energy & Technology (Sen. Nguyen); Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs (Sen. Lovelett); Way & Means, Capital Budget Chair (Sen. Mullet).

Nearly 400 bills have been [pre-filed](#) in the House and Senate, covering topics from education credit access and curriculum reform, updating the business corporation act, voting rights, retail theft and online marketplace reform, judicial rights, and traffic safety.

Governor Jay Inslee (D), in mid-December, released his [proposed budgets](#), which proposes large spending into affordable housing and includes issuing \$4 billion in housing bonds, which would require approval from the legislature and voters, to finance parts of the budget. There remains a tough dynamic in terms of housing and zoning issues between many local elected officials and the state which will play out further over the session.

Several statewide officials are also releasing proposals for the upcoming legislative session. Attorney General Bob Ferguson, in partnership with Representative Mari Leavitt, is proposing HB 1051, also known as the "Scam Protection Act", to address illegal robocalls and robocall harassment. Additionally, he and the Governor are proposing legislation to outlaw assault weapons.

BUDGETS OUTLOOK

Revenue updates from the last quarter of the year have not shown a major decrease in revenue projections. Budget writers have remained cautiously optimistic of future projections but have stated that they are not anticipating strong growth in revenue.

Budget writers have also said they are not planning on cutting the current budget or making major changes to the budget, rather are looking to assess program effectiveness with current funding levels and examine performance of programs that the Legislature has adopted in the past several years. The budget picture will continue to be shaped throughout the session and as the state revenue forecasts are issued in the spring of 2023, reflecting a possibly changing economic picture. Much remains to be seen.

In general, we are not yet hearing significant support for major legislative proposals for broad-based tax or fee increases in the 2023 session...but we will keep you in the loop as legislation is introduced.

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